

REMARKS

Claim 3 is canceled. Claims 1, 2 and 4-19 are pending in this application. The claims have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicants' invention. No new matter is added. The features in the claims as amended were present in the originally filed specification.

Specification Objections to Drawings

Applicants request that the amendment to the specification as set forth above be entered in the record and submit that the specification and drawings have been amended such that the objections to the drawings and the specification have been overcome. For example, applicants have added reference numerals to Fig. 8 and have added reference numeral 17 on Figures 12 and 13 to identify the opposed protuberances 17 on the lock plug 5 set forth in claims 6 and 17. With reference to the objection that the flat portion of claim 12 is not identified, applicants submit that the flat portion of the shaft is shown as reference numeral 120 on Fig. 26 and is described at line 10 on line 2. Accordingly, applicants request that the objections be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. 102 Rejections

The Office Action states on page 2 that claims 1-3, 5 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,220,759 ('759) to Miller. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants submit that Miller does not teach the feature of amended claim 1 that the shaft has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket. Therefore the spring acts between the shaft and applies a biasing force which urges the shaft to rotate the pawls such that the pawls engage the keeper. As the cited reference fails to teach at least one feature in the claims as amended,

applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of the claims.

The Office Action states on page 3 that claims 10, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,718,467 ('467) to Weinerman. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants submit that Miller does not teach the feature of original independent claim 10 of a center shaft piece, said center shaft piece having at least one recess at each of two opposite longitudinal ends of said center shaft piece;

a first end shaft piece and second end shaft piece, each of said first and second end shaft pieces having a protuberance at an end thereof, each protuberance being engaged with a respective recess of the center shaft piece,

As the cited reference fails to teach at least one feature in the claims as amended, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of the claims.

35 U.S.C. 103 Rejections

The Examiner states on pages 3 through 6 that claims 4, 6, 10-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of various references.

With respect to claims 4 and 6, applicants submit that the primary reference Miller fails to teach the feature of amended claim 1 that the shaft has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the present invention.

With respect to claims 10-19, applicants submit that the cited references fail to teach the features with respect to a center shaft piece, said center shaft piece having at least one recess at each of two opposite longitudinal ends of said center shaft piece. Also, none of the references provides a teaching, motivation or suggestion to arrive at the present invention.

Accordingly, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections.


CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants' present invention, as recited in the amended claims now more clearly and particularly, is patentable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections in this case is hereby respectfully requested.

If further matters remain in connection with this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned representative to resolve them.

Respectfully submitted,

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